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POLITICAL PARTIES IN PORTO RICO.

It has long been one of the accepted principles of political science that the growth of political parties reflects the constantly changing relations of class and industrial interests. In England, for instance, we trace the growth of the liberal party to the rise of the middle-classes, consequent upon the industrial development of the early decades of the nineteenth century; in Prussia the strength of the conservative party is directly traceable to the power of the landed proprietors of the northern provinces. In a word; the relation between the industrial and social development of a people and the principles of its political parties, seems so direct as to be almost self-evident. The formulation of political doctrines in party platforms becomes, therefore, the concrete expression of economic interests and political ideals.

While this organic relation can readily be established under normal conditions, it is subject to important limitations when normal development is broken. The old lines of demarcation then disappear; new interests, new aspirations and new ideals break down party divisions. The sudden disappearance of traditional antagonisms takes from existing parties much of their reason for existence, and in the confusion and uncertainty which results the new political parties, rising from the ruins of the old, fail to give accurate expression to class and sectional demands.

It would be difficult to find a more striking illustration of these principles than is offered by the history of political parties in Porto Rico. The sudden break with Spanish traditions, together with the new political and industrial opportunities afforded under American rule, served to undermine the accepted and unquestioned standards of the people, and to obscure, for a time at least, the real community of interests of the more progressive elements. It is not surprising,

therefore, that the political combinations effected during the first years of American rule give evidence of incongruities in their make-up and inconsistencies in their attitude towards great public questions, which are indicative of the fact that the process of adjustment to the new conditions has but begun.

In order to understand the rise of the political parties which have been formed under American rule, it is necessary to picture the situation during the latter years of Spanish domination. The Spanish government consistently pursued the policy of discouraging political activity in the native population. In fact, all forms of association and organization were regarded with suspicion because of the fear of secret political agitation. In some respects, this has been one of the greatest misfortunes of the Porto Rican people, for it prevented the free development of that spirit of association and co-operation which is so necessary to a healthful political life. The summary punishment inflicted upon the few who dared incur the displeasure of the authorities served effectively to check any open manifestations of disaffection. The Spanish government could, furthermore, count upon the unquestioned support of the native Spaniards, resident in the Island. The fact that the bulk of the trade and commerce was in their hands, and that they had secured a hold upon the native planters through the mortgaging of plantations, made the task of suppressing any tendencies towards political organization comparatively simple.

The extreme administrative centralization of the Spanish system also contributed towards this end. Little opportunity was given to the people of the Island, even in their local governments, to participate in the management of their affairs. The mayors of the "municipios," or towns, were in fact, if not in law, appointed by the central government. The local councils were subservient to its authority, and even after the system of elective councils had been intro-

duced, the elections were so conducted as to assure the supremacy of the agents of the government.

But in spite of all these precautions, and, in fact, largely because of them, a number of secret societies were organized, ostensibly for social purposes, but in reality with political ends. Owing to the vigilance of the government, it was impossible for these societies to acquire great power, but they served, nevertheless, to keep alive the spirit of discontent, as well as to strengthen the desire for greater autonomy in local affairs.

The ease with which Porto Rico was governed stands in marked contrast with conditions in Cuba, where affairs were rapidly going from bad to worse. From 1850 on, revolution followed revolution almost without interval, gaining in strength as the repressive measures became more severe. The futility of attempting to govern the island without reference to local opinion was gradually forcing itself upon the political leaders in Spain. The disturbed condition of Cuba made it seem all the more desirable to keep Porto Rico free from disaffection, and the extreme measures used to repress the Cuban uprising served to strengthen the disposition to meet the demands of the Porto Rican people in a spirit of conciliation. Although the desire for independence never acquired the dignity of a great popular movement, the movement for local autonomy gave evidence of considerable strength. The changed attitude of the home government was first shown in the reforms instituted in 1897 by Canovas del Castillo, which were intended to give greater powers of local self-government to the towns. The Spanish liberal party, under the leadership of Sagasta, fearing that this concession might draw from them the support of the Porto Rican liberals and autonomists, called a conference to which a delegation from Porto Rico was invited. At this conference the autonomic system, instituted in Porto Rico in 1897 was agreed upon, in return for which the native autonomist party agreed to give its support to the Liberal

party in Spain. The period of harmonious co-operation which seemed thus inaugurated was to be of but short duration. The return of the Porto Rican delegation from Madrid marks the beginning of a split within the native element, which is the turning point in the development of political parties in the island.

The agreement with the Liberal party in Spain was looked upon with considerable suspicion, especially by the poorer classes. There existed in the more radical element of the native population the feeling that the compact with the Spanish Ministry was a compact with tyranny, and that the work of the Porto Rican delegates was a betrayal of the interests of the island. This radical sentiment did not, however, take the form of definite political organization. In fact, events moved so rapidly that but little time was given for opinion to crystallize.

The autonomic government went into operation on the eleventh of February, 1898. It provided for a governor-general, who was appointed by the Spanish Crown, and who was primarily, commander-in-chief of the army and navy. His civil power was subject to the direction and control of an insular cabinet, which included a president and secretary of the treasury, a secretary of government and justice, a secretary of education, a secretary of public works and a secretary of agriculture. The legislative authority was vested in a representative assembly, which was given control over the local budget and other powers of legislation in local matters, subject to the supervision of the central government at Madrid. Local government was organized on a most liberal plan, with universal suffrage for males over twenty-five years of age.

During the period immediately preceding the installation of the new government, party lines became more clearly defined. The distinctive Spanish party was in the field with a well-developed organization and commanding a large share of the available patronage. The Opportunists

ranked second in importance, and represented the followers of the delegation that had entered into the agreement with Sagasta. They were, in a sense, "opportunistic-autonomists" who accepted the concessions of the Spanish Government as the best obtainable under the circumstances. The more extreme autonomists, who were known as the "Pure Autonomists," were not satisfied with the Sagasta reforms and demanded a more complete autonomic system. What was known as the Liberal party corresponded very closely to the Opportunist, except that in the former the native element was predominant, whereas amongst the Opportunists there was a considerable representation of the Spanish population.

The new government was organized with representatives of the autonomist, opportunist and liberal parties, but dissensions soon arose in the insular cabinet owing to charges of corrupt practices at the first elections under the new system, and, as a result, the autonomists retired, leaving the Sagasta Liberals in control. At the head of this new government, and occupying the position of president of the council, was Luis Muñoz-Rivera, who afterwards became leader of the Federal party.

It was with this government in operation, and this party in power, that the American military commanders had to deal in October, 1898. The Spanish autonomic system was not formally abolished until February, 1899. General Henry then ordered that the Council of Secretaries be discontinued and that four new secretaryships be established, a secretary of state, of the treasury, of justice and of the interior. Three of these positions were given to Sagasta liberals and one to a member of the autonomist party.

The first test of strength as between these parties came with the municipal elections of November, 1899. The American military government, in its endeavor to bring the population into closer contact with public affairs, determined to make the first test of the political capacity of the people

in the election of local officers. It was in the preparation for these elections that the new parties, which have been struggling for supremacy since the change of sovereignty, received definite form. In this reorganization the old Spanish party was completely eliminated, as its members were excluded from participation in public affairs by the fact of nationality. The Autonomist party, having lost its reason for existence, was dissolved and reorganized as the Republican party. In a broad, general way it may be said that there is a lineal relationship between the autonomist and the republican parties, traceable to the fact that both appealed to the more radical element in the native population. The tie is not so close as might seem at first glance; the Republican party having been organized with a view to bringing to its support the elements hitherto neglected; the poorer whites and negroes. The purpose which the leaders have consistently followed is to make it the popular party of the island, and in this way they have achieved conspicuous success.

The Liberal party was also reorganized, and under the name "Federal Party" attracted the larger property-holding interests and merchants. To it belong the more conservative elements of the Porto Rican population. Its greatest weakness, however, lies in the bourbon tendencies of its members. Their horror of negro domination, coupled with a fear of the results of a further extension of the suffrage to the poorer whites, has largely determined their attitude. They welcome American rule, but look with considerable misgiving upon the probable effects of American democratic ideas on the institutions of the island.

Between the platforms of the two parties there is no marked difference. They vie with each other in the expression of attachment to American principles and American institutions, they both advocate a territorial form of government for Porto Rico, a reorganization of the system of taxation, and a system of currency identical with that of the United States. One difference of considerable significance,

however, is the fact that the Federal party does not clearly express itself on the suffrage question, whereas the Republican party does not hesitate to define its position. One of the prominent planks of the Republican platform reads as follows: "We affirm our devotion to the national constitution and the autonomy reserved to our country thereunder; to the personal rights and liberties of all the citizens of our country, and especially to the supreme and sovereign right of every lawful citizen, rich or poor, native or foreign born, to cast one free ballot in public elections and to have that ballot duly counted. We hold the free and honest popular ballot and the just and equal representation of all the people to be the foundation of our republican government, and demand effective legislation to secure the integrity and purity of elections, which are the fountains of all public authority."

The municipal elections of November, 1899, were held under the supervision of the military authorities and resulted in the victory of the Federals. There were indications, however, of the growing strength of the more popular Republican party. The large majority secured by the Federals blinded the leaders to the necessity of unremitting activity in maintaining and extending the party organization. The Republican leaders, some of whom had been educated in the United States, were fully aware of the value of thorough organization, and during the period between November, 1899, and the first elections under civil government in November, 1900, they were at work strengthening their position in every part of the island. The leaders were impressing upon the people that the dominance of the Federals meant a continuation of Spanish traditions; that its members gave no thought to the interests of the mass of the population, and that thoroughly democratic rule could not prevail in Porto Rico until the Republican party came into power.

This period of political agitation proved to be too severe a strain on the system of secretaryships instituted by General

Henry. Internal dissensions impaired and even threatened to destroy its usefulness, and led the military governor to abolish the system and substitute therefor a series of boards. This took from the Liberal, or as it was now known, the Federal party, one of the main sources of strength:—its power with the insular government at San Juan. It meant a definite break of the liberal leaders with the military government. Their wounded pride at being thus summarily thrust from power soon found expression in newspaper attacks on the military commanders and in criticism of American rule. As the expressions of dissatisfaction grew more and more violent, it became clear that the Federals were gradually placing themselves in a position which might readily be construed as one of opposition to American institutions. This they were anxious to avoid, and, therefore, directed their energies to securing the establishment of civil rule, hoping thereby to regain their power.

It is but natural that the break of the Federal party with the military government influenced their attitude towards the civil *régime* established under the Foraker Act. The leaders were unable to approach the new government in that spirit of co-operation which the best interests of the party demanded. In fact, they showed an unwillingness to co-operate with the American officials unless assured of a large share of the available offices. While this was the attitude of the leaders, it did not represent the views of the rank and file of the party.

The Republican leaders, on the other hand, brought to the new government a free and open acceptance of everything distinctly American, and a readiness to aid the American officials in the great work of civic organization. The desire on the part of Governor Allen and his associates to remain aloof from party conflicts, was construed by the Federal leaders as an unwillingness to give them proper recognition. This led to a further straining of relations, which finally resulted in open rupture. The events

leading up to this break are of special interest, as they illustrate with great clearness the attitude of the party towards the Government.

Under section twenty-seven of the Foraker Act, the Executive Council is made the upper house of the local legislative assembly, and is also given certain executive and advisory powers. It is composed of eleven members; six heads of executive departments: the Secretary, Treasurer, Auditor, Attorney-General, Commissioner of Education and the Commissioner of the Interior; together with five other members appointed by the President. Of these eleven, at least five must be natives, and the policy adopted by President McKinley was to appoint Americans to the headship of the six executive departments, and to select the five remaining members from among the natives. Of these five, two were appointed from the Republican party, two from the Federal, and the fifth, an independent.

The dissatisfaction of the Federal leaders, growing out of the gradual decline of their power and influence, reached its climax when the Executive Council settled down to the work of districting the island for the elections of November, 1900. Article twenty-eight of the Foraker Act requires that, for the purpose of electing delegates to the lower house of the legislative assembly, the island be divided into seven districts from each of which five delegates are to be chosen. The task of determining the boundaries of the electoral divisions was assigned to the Council. In order to avoid any possible criticism of the attitude of the American members and at the same time impress upon the native members the full responsibilities of the situation, the five Porto Rican members were appointed a committee to draw up a plan for the districting of the island. It was soon apparent that each party would have its own geographical plan. The final acceptance of a plan prepared by the independent member led to the first definite break of the Federal party with the administration. The charge was made that the

island had been "gerrymandered" in order to secure a Republican majority and Muñoz-Rivera immediately ordered the Federals to withdraw from the elections.

The campaign period was marked by bitter denunciations of the administration in the Federal newspapers, which at times degenerated into personal attacks upon the Governor, and even upon the President of the United States. The result of the election was a lower house unanimously Republican. The order of the Federal leaders to their followers to withdraw from the election was so generally followed that the Federal party cast but 148 out of a total of 58,515 votes. The total registration was 123,140.

Although at the time, this withdrawal of some of the best elements of the population from political life seemed unfortunate, its effect was quite different from what was anticipated by the Federal leaders. They had hoped that so drastic a measure would lead the Administration to make overtures with a view to restoring harmony. It did not occur to them that the position thus taken placed them at the mercy of the Republican party. Governor Allen and his associates took the view that the Federal party, in withdrawing from public affairs, was evading a great public duty and was, therefore, to be treated as politically non-existent. The Government at Washington looked upon this childish display of party wrath as an indication of the inability of the native population to manage its own affairs. From every point of view, therefore, the action of the Federals worked great injury to the party.

Upon the withdrawal of the Federal members from the Executive Council, President McKinley promptly appointed two Republicans. Thus, neither house of the legislative assembly contained an element opposed to the administration. While under ordinary circumstances this might have been a serious matter, it proved a real advantage during the first and second sessions of the legislative assembly. The work of bringing the institutions of the

island into closer harmony with the American system was one which necessarily fell to the American members of the administration. The organizing power had to come from them and it was necessary for the successful issue of this work that they should receive the unqualified support of a party whose faith in American institutions was born of a deep admiration of our principles of government. The presence of an opposition party would have led to long and, perhaps, bitter wranglings, which would certainly have delayed much-needed legislation. Incidentally, the Federal party was taught a lesson which it is not apt soon to forget, viz.: that every political right carries with it a corresponding obligation, and that the one cannot be enjoyed without a willingness to meet the requirements of the other.

It must be conceded, however, that the situation during the last year and a half has been abnormal, and now that the most important steps in the legal and administrative reorganization of the island have been taken, it is a matter of considerable importance that the parties resume their normal political status. The ignoring of the Federals by the administration has taught them a lesson which has been extremely salutary and there is every indication of a strong desire to return to active participation in political life. With this return, however, there is likely to be some shifting of party lines. The lack of any opposition to the Republicans in the House of Delegates during the last two sessions has led to dissensions within the party and may give rise to a new combination of political forces. There is a possibility that the more conservative wing of the Republicans will join with the best elements of the Federals in the formation of a new party which will support the American members of the administration in their efforts to bring the people to a higher level of political training. It is in such a new adjustment of party lines that the best interests of Porto Rico will be subserved.

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San Juan, Porto Rico.

APPENDIX.

PLATFORMS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES OF PORTO RICO.

PLATFORM OF THE FEDERAL PARTY OF PORTO RICO.

To the People:

1. The members of the Puerto Rican¹ Federal party, believing that the time has come for the reorganization of their party with a name that may embrace their ideas, and a platform that may give them a definite and concrete form, have decided to incorporate themselves in a political party that will be called the Federal Party, in order to co-operate in the good administration of the country.

2. The Federal party declares that it accepts and congratulates itself upon the annexation of the island to the United States, believing that Puerto Rico will be a prosperous and happy land under the protection of the American flag and institutions.

3. The principles of the Federal party are condensed in the following formula: To influence in a direct and efficacious way the development of the interests of the island through an honest and intelligent administration, and a firm and decided tendency towards the absolute assimilation of the island with the United States, both in laws and in form of government.

4. The Federal party asks for Puerto Rico that it be made a territory of the Union, with all the privileges of a state except the right to send senators and representatives to Congress, to which the island could send, like any other territory, a delegate with voice but without a vote.

5. The Federal party hopes that Puerto Rico in the future will be made a state without any restriction, like any other state in the Union.

¹ At the time of the adoption of this platform, Congress had not as yet changed the name of the island to "*Porto Rico*."

6. The Federal party will work to maintain the complete autonomy of the municipalities, so that the ayuntamientos may resolve all their local affairs, such as municipal accounts, budgets, public instruction, police, public health, charity, public works, etc., without the intervention of the central authority.

7. The Federal party will also work to maintain the rights of individuals, and will advocate the most ample system of suffrage, without opposing, however, any limitations that may be thought prudent by the United States, but representing always their desire that all resident citizens of the island be permitted to vote.

8. The Federal party understands the necessity of abolishing all customs duties between Puerto Rico and the rest of the Union, and will advocate the establishment of free trade and a uniform currency, the American dollar to be made the legal-tender standard with the least possible loss to the insular currency.

9. The Federal party realizes also that the development of the country requires that franchises be given to banking institutions with the greatest possible urgency; that the insular industries be effectively protected; that an impulse be given without delay to public works; and that direct imposts for the general expenses of the territory be gradually suppressed.

10. The Federal party has at heart the interests of the laborers and farmers; it watches with interest their progress in public life; it works to harmonize the interest of capital and labor, and will persist in giving a place in elective bodies to virtuous and intelligent men, independently of race and occupation.

11. The Federal party will leave the creation and maintenance of schools to the municipalities, committing the primary tuition in all its various degrees to the representatives of the people, subject to the general plan that may be adopted by the legislature of the territory.

12. Respecting the higher instruction, both university and professional, the Federal party will propose the installation of all necessary centres to arrive at a good standard in arts and sciences, giving special attention to those that are of practical application; and will incessantly advocate the establishment of a university.

13. The Federal party will keep apart from obsolete methods, and will institute colleges where women may receive serious instruction that may make it possible for them to practice the different professions to which they already dedicate themselves in more advanced countries.

14. In general we believe that our legislation ought to tend to an identification of methods of the American and Puerto Rican schools; this end may be reached by a gradual and scientific adaptation.

15. In reference to the organization of courts, the Federal party believes in the advisability of electing judicial officers by popular suffrage, by the vote of the legislature, or of appointing them by competitive examinations, according to the nature of their duties, independently of any political interest, thus placing the judges in a position of wholesome independence.

16. The Federal party places among its most important principles the establishment of trial by jury.

17. The Federal party proposes to undertake the reform of our civil, penal, and administrative legislation, upholding the moral and material interests of our society, but with decided democratic tendency.

18. The Federal party, finally, has faith in the traditions and characteristics of the American people, and has also much confidence in the power of the people of this island to make Puerto Rico, under the United States flag, a land of wealth and culture.

SAN JUAN, P. R., October 1, 1898.

PLATFORM OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF PORTO RICO,
1899.

To the People:

The old political parties that struggled during the Spanish domination have disappeared.

It is urgent now to start a new party, with new ideas, that all the residents of the country who wish, may unite in the development of our island under the protection and principles of the American flag.

Our principles in brief are as follows:

Definite and sincere annexation to the United States.

An organized territory for Puerto Rico, as the way to become in time a state of the Federal Union.

We are convinced that it would not be for the benefit of our country to be independent on account of its small area and on account of the bad political education we have received.

We do not feel satisfied with the false advantages of an Antilles confederation, as it is true that the old Spanish Antilles have the same origin; the language, history and traditions are the same. Cuba is not yet organized. We could not find any assistance towards perfection in Santo Domingo, as it is rapidly retrograding under her form of government.

Puerto Rico could not find in its surroundings any examples for self-government or of its local affairs, hence we seek the guarantees of a powerful and well-organized nation that promises us the free exercise of liberties.

Puerto Rico, to-day a territory and later a state of the Union, will realize the most perfect idea of the Puerto Rican people.

When we have effective local government and direct intercourse with the states of the Union in national and other affairs, with the good influence which such a union would bring to our island, it will be the means of guiding us to the highest culture in human destinies.

The time has come when we must advance American principles and customs. With due care, knowing the needs of our people, we have arranged a platform for the "Puerto Rican Republican Party," which we submit to the consideration of our people, trusting and hoping that every good and patriotic citizen will join us and support our just cause.

A convention will soon be called to discuss and decide upon a programme and consider in detail the principles stated in our platform, which are as follows:

Platform.

It is the highest duty of every citizen to uphold the laws of the land and the integrity of his country.

That we pledge ourselves as men, animated by a common cause, aiming at a common object, to do all in our power to improve our government.

We endorse and commend the able, patriotic, and true American spirit manifested by Hon. William McKinley, President of the United States, in releasing us from the misrule of Spain, and we pledge our faithfulness to adhere to the new principles of our new country, and have for our aim harmony, unity and good government, relying with confidence upon the hope of a speedy settlement of our national affairs.

Name.

1. The name of our party shall be the Republican party of Puerto Rico.

American Flag.

2. We declare our sincere loyalty to the American flag and American ideas, and hereby pledge ourselves to strive to become worthy of the great nation of which we now are a part.

Annexation.

3. We hail with pride our annexation to the United States.

Government.

4. We believe that the people of Porto Rico could be trusted with the civil government of the island, but as that authority only emanates from Congress of the United States, it is but our duty to wait their action. While under military government awaiting action by Congress, we desire that all civil offices should be filled by men capable, honest and of unquestioned loyalty to the Government of the United States, and disposed to act singly for the best interest of this island and our common country, without distinction, thereby affording us an opportunity to demonstrate our fitness for self-government, with all the burdens and responsibilities which it entails, and which will hasten the day when our island will have a place among the states of the Union.

Free Suffrage.

5. We affirm our devotion to the national Constitution and the autonomy reserved to our country thereunder; to the personal rights and liberties of all the citizens of our country, and especially to the supreme and sovereign right of every lawful citizen, rich or poor, native or foreign born, to cast one free ballot in public elections, and to have that ballot duly counted.

We hold the free and honest popular ballot and the just and equal representation of all the people to be the foundation of our republican government, and demand effective legislation to secure the integrity and purity of elections, which are the fountains of all public authority.

Freedom.

6. The reliance of free popular government and the maintenance of freedom among all men is upon the intelligence and integrity of the people. We therefore declare our devotion to liberty of thought and freedom of speech and of the press, and approve these agencies, which con-

tribute to this end. We oppose any union of Church and State.

Labor.

7. We declare our hostility to the introduction into this island of foreign contract labor.

Education.

8. In this new acquisition to the United States, in order to promote education throughout the island, we favor the establishment of free public and non-sectarian schools, sufficient to afford to every child growing up in the land the opportunity of a good common-school education. We believe that the English language, soon to be the official language, should be taught in all our schools, thus laying the foundation fitting our island for a place as a free state of the Union.

Taxation.

9. That the systems of taxation under which revenues are derived are vicious and insufficient, and it is necessary for the equalization of the burden of taxation that the law regulating the same be changed at once to American principles of taxation suitable to the conditions of Puerto Rico.

Commerce.

10. We believe, as we are under the direct protection of the United States and a part of that great nation, that commerce should be free between the Island of Puerto Rico and the United States, thereby giving us the same rights and privileges of any state or territory of the Union.

Money.

11. In order to divert the financial panic which now threatens us, and in order that the tiller of the soil and the tradesman of the land may be justly compensated for their

toils and labors, we declare ourselves in favor of the exchange of the provincial money of the Island of Puerto Rico for the money of the United States. As it is right and proper that every dollar, paper or coin, issued by the government be as good as any other, and that the exchange take place immediately with free commerce between Puerto Rico and the United States.

Agriculture.

12. Puerto Rico is an agricultural country, and upon that portion of the island falls the greatest burden of taxation under the present system.

The extremely oppressive taxation, the high tariff on agricultural implements, and the excessive customs duties on the products of the soil, should be so regulated as to furnish relief to the agriculturist, who cannot now meet his daily obligations.

Judiciary.

13. We are in favor of establishing the American system of courts, which guarantees to every man justice and right, and a trial freely without sale, fully without any denial, and speedily without delay according to the law of the land.

14. We congratulate ourselves and our country on being under the protection of the American flag, the recognized emblem of liberty, and will lend every effort to advance civilization, to teach loyalty, to love American institutions, and honor Washington, Lincoln and McKinley, whose names are household words throughout the land.